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HEALTH SURVEY UNDERWAY IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

The nation's most comprehensive study of the health and nutritional status of Americans gets underway in San Bernardino beginning on January 7, 2008.

Each year, approximately 7,000 randomly-selected residents in 15 counties across the nation have the opportunity to participate in the latest National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

"NHANES is very much like a 'health exam center on wheels,' that goes out into actual communities to get data on real Americans," said CDC Director Julie L. Gerberding. "It truly is a unique resource for health information in this country, and without it we wouldn't have data on a number of important health conditions."

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“San Bernardino County residents have participated in the survey in previous years. The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) has provided us with valuable information about the health of our community and the nation as a whole,” said Dr. Margaret Beed.

Some of the past findings uncovered through NHANES include:

- Between survey periods 1988-1994 and 2001-2004, the percent of adults with high serum cholesterol fell from 20 percent to 17 percent.
- Over the same period, the percent of adults with hypertension increased from 22 percent to 25 percent.

In addition, NHANES data is used by NCHS to create the standardized growth charts used by pediatricians across the country to track children’s growth.

NHANES has been conducted by NCHS for nearly 50 years and provides annual estimates on a range of diseases such as the number of Americans who have heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, respiratory disease, and other conditions.

The information gathered in NHANES is used by public health officials, legislators, and physicians to develop sound health policies, direct and design health programs and services, and expand the health knowledge for the nation.

Individuals selected for the survey represent the U.S. population of all ages. Additional emphasis in the current NHANES is placed on the health of older Americans, African-Americans and Hispanics.

Respondents first participate in a health interview conducted in the respondent’s home. The health examination that follows takes place in one of three mobile examination centers that travel to different communities, large and small, urban and rural, across the country for data collection.

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A team of health personnel, including a physician, nutritionists, and health and laboratory technicians using high-tech, state-of-the-art equipment, staffs the mobile examination centers. A team of specially-trained professionals conducts the household interviews.

All participants receive an examination by a physician, as well as a dietary interview, and body measurements that include height and weight. Some will be eligible for a hearing test, a scan to evaluate skeletal health, a visual acuity test, as well as a test for degenerative eye disease. The various tests and procedures depend upon the age of the participant.

No medical care is provided directly in the examination center, but a report on the medical findings is given to each participant along with an explanation from survey medical staff.

All individual information collected in the survey is kept strictly confidential, and privacy is protected by public law.

Participants selected to undergo the physical examination receive reimbursement for travel expenses and remuneration of up to \$100 per person.

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